

REMARKS

The Office Action of May 21, 2003 has been received and its contents carefully noted.

The present Amendment revises a paragraph in the specification to refer to "a voice or sound part 23," (see the buzzer in Figure 3 of the application's drawings) instead of just "a voice part 23." The Amendment also revises the Abstract to improve its form under US patent practice. Additionally, the present Amendment modifies claim 1 to further distinguish the invention claimed therein from the prior art (as will be discussed in more detail below), revises claims 2- 4 to improve their form under US claim-drafting practice, and adds new claims 5-13 to further protect the invention. Of these new claims, claims 5 and 8 are independent.

The present application discloses a timekeeping device that is incorporated in a computer peripheral (such as a mouse, keyboard, or trackball) to remind the user of the elapse of an operation time limit or even to turn the computer off.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 for anticipation by US patent 6,137,479 to Olsen et al (hereafter simply "Olsen"), and rejects claim 4 for obviousness on the basis of the same reference. For the reasons discussed below, however, it is respectfully submitted that all of the independent claims that are now pending in this application are patentable over the Olson reference.

With reference to the passage at column 5 of Olsen, line 53 to column 6, line 2, Olsen's Figures 3 and 4A illustrate a watch mouse device 54 having features such as switches 28, a keypad 66, and a display 60. The arrangement also includes "a timekeeping circuit 56 to provide the timekeeping functions" (column 5, lines 55-56). It is likely that an ordinarily skilled person would conclude that Olsen's "timekeeping functions" are those associated with an ordinary watch, since what Olsen discloses is simply a mouse built into a watch.

Independent claim 1 now provides that a timekeeper is disposed on an input unit that is connected to a computer peripheral interface. The timekeeper has a timekeeping circuit that is connected to a control circuit of the input unit, an alarm unit, a display unit, and switches for starting timekeeping, setting a predetermined operation time limit, or resetting time. Claim 1 now concludes by reciting that "the control circuit turns the computer off after said input unit is operated for said predetermined operation time limit." It is respectfully submitted that this is neither disclosed nor suggested by the reference.

New independent claim 5 is a method claim that recites the step of "turning the computer off when the operation time reaches the operation time limit." Again, it is respectfully submitted that this is not suggested by the reference.

New independent claim 8 provides that a mouse has a manually operable means for setting an operation time limit. It also recites "an alarm unit carried by the mouse for emitting an audible or visible signal when the operation time limit expires." The reference does not disclose an alarm. Although it is acknowledged that some watches have alarms, it is respectfully submitted that such an alarm (even assuming, for the sake of argument, that Olsen's mouse watch device 54 uses an alarm watch) would not provide an incentive for an ordinarily skilled person to provide means on a mouse for manually setting an operation time limit for usage of a computer and then activate the alarm when the operation time limit expires.

Since the remaining claims depend from the independent claims discussed above and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, it is respectfully submitted that they are patentable along with their independent claims and need not be further discussed.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Allen Wood
Allen Wood

Registration No. 28,134
RABIN & BERDO, P.C.
Customer No. 23, 995
Tel: (202) 371-8976
Fax: (202) 408-0924

AW/tlc